

FRANCIS A HANCOCK - PERFORATOR OF POSTAGE STAMPS

JOHN MATHEWS has spent some very useful hours in the National Library of Australia, near to where he lives, looking through the London Directories. One of the references tied in with a piece of information in John Nelson's "The Handbook of British Perfins". John Mathews writes:-

"In his book, John Nelson talks of Francis Hancock, printer and stationer, of the Wood Street (EC) Post Office; who later co-founded The Initial Perforating Co. Limited. Hancock's half page advertisement in the 1878 London Directory (see below) contains much interesting information, and the coat of arms! His offer to perforate free of charge indicates the competitive nature of business amongst the various postmasters in the EC postal district."

1878.]

LONDON ADVERTISEMENTS.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO LARGE CONSUMERS OF **POSTAGE STAMPS.**

FRANCIS A. HANCOCK, Printer and Stationer,

WOOD STREET
POST OFFICE,



IS SUPPLYING POSTAGE
AND OTHER STAMPS

PERFORATED
WITH THE INITIAL OF ANY FIRM,



FREE OF CHARGE
FOR PERFORATING.

TERMS:—Firms using £20 monthly to charge whatever is made beyond the value of ... Stamps, which can be had not less than £5 at one time.

SMALL CONSUMERS OF STAMPS can be supplied on the following terms—a charge is made for the die on first order, from £5s., according to the number of letters. Stamps can be supplied not less than £5 worth at a time (as sorted as desired) at the value of the stamps only.

EXTRACT FROM "BRITISH POSTAL GUIDE," pages 20 and 21.

"In consequence of representations made to the Post Office by various Firms that there is reason to believe that their postage stamps were perforated by persons in their employ, the Department has recommended either that the name of Firm, &c., be printed on the back of the stamp, or the initials perforated through the stamp by means of a machine devised for the purpose; so that, the sale of such stamps being thereby rendered difficult (Postmasters having been instructed not to purchase any of them), there may be little or no temptation to steal them."

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE ABOVE SYSTEM ARE, viz.:—

It prevents misappropriation or purloining. It prevents the sale of stamps so perforated. It is recognised and recommended by G.P.O. authorities. It is an advertisement. It can be applied to Receipt Stamps, Foreign Bill Stamps, Postage Wrappers, Post Cards, Postage Envelopes, Telegraph Stamps, &c.

All Orders for Stamps must be accompanied by Cash or a Cheque payable in London, crossed "CITY BANK," or the order of FRANCIS A. HANCOCK, or arrangement may be made for payment on delivery. Orders received by First Morning Post will be delivered by noon the following day.

Should you desire the above plan, please send name and address, and our representative will wait upon you and give any further information that may be required.

The "Wood Street Post Office," 37 & 38, Wood Street, E.C., & Steam Printing Works, Moor Lane.
CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO WITH LARGE FIRMS. MACHINE PRINTING FOR THE TRADE.

F. A. HANCOCK, Proprietor.

Receipt Stamps overprinted with the name of the firm FREE OF CHARGE (in accordance with the special instructions from the BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE). Five Pounds at a time being ordered.

"The perfin shown in the ad. (F.A.H) does not appear in the New Illustrated Catalogue but there is a very similar one, FAH (F0125.01), which might have been his own. Are there any of these known with "Wood St" postmarks?

In the 1880's and early 1890's, amongst the tenants at 37 Wood St, the London Directory lists "Hancock Bros, printers" and "The Initial Perforating Co.Limited". Is it possible that H.B.s.. (H0805.01) and IPC°/LTD (I2055.01) were their respective perfins, produced by Francis Hancock?"